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ABSTRACT

This book reports an ethnographic study, conducted over 2 years, of 30 teachers from 18 schools (preschool through high school), who participated in a staff development program in multicultural education. Observations and interviews indicate how multicultural education was actually presented to the teachers, and how their perceptions and teaching methods changed over the years. Although most teachers reported learning a good deal, changes in teaching and discussions of teaching were fairly limited. The lack of actual change is analyzed, concentrating on the following issues: (1) the nature of staff development and how the multicultural education was packaged; (2) the structure of schools as institutions; and (3) the identities and life experiences of the teachers as white women. It is argued that radical structuralism is the best theoretical perspective for understanding social issues addressed by multicultural education. Multicultural education, however, is usually presented to teachers in the language of liberalism, emphasizing individual mobility and equal opportunity, or even of conservatism; and most teachers in fact interpret inequality issues through conservatism or liberalism. A concluding chapter suggests directions to take to do things differently. (Contains 190 references.) (SLD)

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